LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson describes the evaluator's responsibilities before, during, and after an exercise.

Lesson Objectives

At the completion of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify the key responsibilities of the evaluator.
- Explain when it is appropriate to correct issues immediately.
- List and describe the steps included in a preliminary feedback session.
- Describe the documentation and reporting requirements for REP exercises.

BEFORE THE EXERCISE

The Evaluator Packet

When you are given an evaluator assignment, you will receive an evaluator packet containing some very important materials:

- Your assignment.
- Instructions.
- A Pre-Exercise Evaluator Preparation Guide for your assigned evaluation criteria.
- Jurisdiction information such as the response plan, procedures, Extent of Play, and prior issues.

These materials will form the basis of your preparation, and thorough preparation is critical for effective evaluation.

What Does Preparation Involve?

Evaluation begins with **research**. Preparing for your assignment involves:

- Becoming familiar with the jurisdiction.
- Correlating criteria with the plan and procedures.
- Analyzing the scenario, timelines, and Extent of Play.
- Creating a list of actions.
- Developing a data collection plan.
- Attending pre-exercise meetings.

Becoming Familiar with the Jurisdiction

Various types of communities may be involved in the exercise, including:

- Towns
- Cities
- Parishes
- Federal, public, and tribal lands
- States
- Counties

All of these jurisdictions can be involved in offsite emergency response. Carefully study the response plan to understand your jurisdiction's part in the overall response effort.

Jurisdiction Characteristics and Differences

Communities will have some things in common in their emergency response approach. For example, each plan must have certain emergency response functions, as outlined in the NUREG-0654/FEMA-REP-1 planning standards. However, the communities may differ in other aspects, including their:

- Organizational structure.
- History.
- Environment.
- Geopolitical boundaries.

You need to become familiar with the involved communities and be sensitive to any cultural differences that exist. Again—read the plan and ask questions if needed.

Jurisdiction Organizational Structure

States differ in the organizational structures they use for emergency management. In some States, the local governments are the major decisionmakers, with the State government providing support. In other States, the structure is just the opposite.

Researching the plan and other jurisdiction documents provided in the evaluator packet will help you understand the organizational structure for emergency management.

Correlating Criteria With the Plan

An important part of preparing for your assignment is studying the response plan and the implementing procedures to determine where each criterion is addressed and what is required. For example, let's say your area of responsibility includes:

Criterion 3.d.1: Appropriate traffic and access control is established. Accurate instructions are provided to traffic and access control personnel.

You would need to review the plan and procedures to find the provisions that relate to this criterion. Examples of the types of preparatory questions you might ask include:

- Who is responsible for establishing traffic and/or access control points (TCP/ACPs)?
- Are pre-identified TCP/ACPs established in the plan?
- Is there coordination among various Offsite Response Organizers (OROs), such as local and State law enforcement, National Guard, and State and local transportation departments?
- When would TCP/ACPs be established?
- Who deploys TCP/ACP personnel to the assigned location?
- What agency is contacted for control of water, rail, and air traffic? Who notifies them, and when?

The REP Exercise Preparation Guide in your packet will help you ask the right questions to prepare to evaluate each criterion. The questions in the Prep Guide are for preparation, <u>not</u> to be used during the exercise!

Analyzing the Extent of Play

In preparation for the exercise, you must know the specific Extent of Play for each criterion you are evaluating. Studying the Extent of Play and related materials (e.g., scenario, timelines, prior issues) will help you understand:

- How the scenario will unfold (when events will occur)
- What activities will be demonstrated or simulated
- What demonstrations will occur out of sequence
- What to look for as indicators of adequate performance
- What prior issues are to be evaluated

Based on this information, you should develop a **list of actions** expected at your location for your assignment.

Developing a Data Collection Plan

Next, think about how you will collect the required information to determine if criteria are adequately demonstrated. Developing a data collection plan is important because the Evaluation Module does not include "prompts" in the way of questions. You must plan your own benchmarks for evaluating the criteria. Your data collection plan may include:

- Observation points (events and indicators to look for).
- Interviews to be conducted.
- Specific information to be obtained through interview or observation.
- Player-produced materials (e.g., logs, sign-in rosters, announcements, messages) to be collected.
- Information to be coordinated with other evaluators.

Based on this information, you should develop a list of actions expected at your location for your assignment.

In planning for data collection, consider the following factors:

- What is the end result we are looking for?
- What information is needed?
- Who else on the team is evaluating the same criteria?
- Will you need to collect data and materials from other evaluators?
- What does the team leader expect?

Pre-Exercise Meetings

Before the exercise, you will attend one or more preparation meetings, such as a pre-exercise briefing and team meetings. These meetings are your opportunity to learn more about the exercise and raise any questions you may have.

Ground Rules. One of the topics that will be discussed at the pre-exercise briefing are ground rules for the exercise—how the evaluation is expected to be carried out. Ground rules discussions usually address such questions as:

- What is my role during the exercise?
- How do I find out information that is not obvious, like who a player was talking to on the phone and what was discussed?
- If a reporter from the local newspaper or television station tries to interview me, or asks for information about the exercise, what should I do?
- What should I do if a real emergency occurs during the exercise?
- When and how are pre-exercise site visits to be conducted?
- How are meals handled during an exercise?

Your Questions. During your research and planning, be sure to identify any questions you need to have clarified during the pre-exercise meetings.

A Checklist

You should receive the following items, either in the evaluator packet or at the pre-exercise meetings. If you don't, be sure to ask!

- Assignment and preparation materials.
- Scenario information (description, ECLs).
- Policy on immediate correction of potential issues, preliminary direct feedback, and narratives and issues.
- Evaluation logistics (e.g., method of reporting time, arrival time, contact numbers, who gathers player documents, deadlines for work products).
- Previous Area Requiring Corrective Action (ARCA) forms.
- Answers to any questions you have about the exercise, Extent of Play requirements, and demonstration issues.

DURING THE EXERCISE

Getting Started

How you get started in your role as an evaluator affects how effective you will be. Suggestions for getting started include:

- **Get started right.**
  - Arrive 15 to 30 minutes before any scheduled activity.
  - Bring appropriate clothing for the season and assignment. For most exercise locations, this means business attire.
  - Wear identification. Security may not let you in without it.

- **Establish a rapport with the controller and players.** Introduce yourself to the controller and key participants. Remember, exercise players will be aware that you are evaluating them. They may be nervous and apprehensive because they want to do a good job. So try to put them at ease and establish good rapport from the outset. The controller will manage exercise activities. Establishing a rapport with this person will your job run smoothly.

- **Arrange for copies.** Be sure arrangements have been made to receive copies of all logs, messages (including EAS messages), sign-in rosters, notification forms, and other materials developed during the exercise. Don't leave your location without these, unless instructed otherwise by the RAC Chair Team Leader or Site Specialist.

Observing the Action

One of your most important tasks is observing the action. You are the eyes and ears of FEMA. You will play a key role in determining whether what you see and hear meets the performance requirements in your evaluation area.

While focusing on your assigned criteria, you should also observe and record as much of the pertinent activity outside your primary area of responsibility as possible.

Guidelines for conducting your observations include the following:

Be Objective. Objectivity is at the heart of evaluation. Be sure to:

- Watch, listen, and take notes.
- Document what you see and hear and what should have occurred but did not.
- Be certain of the facts you record.
- Don't mix fact with opinion.
- Develop a detailed time record for observed events.

The guide for your observations, and the basis for documenting those observations, is the Evaluation Module form. After the exercise, you will complete one Evaluation Module for each criterion assigned to you.

Be Alert. Stay "tuned in" and pay attention:

- Look at the log and wait for the event you are trying to observe.
- Be available and ready to observe at the correct time.
- Move around—be in the right place at the right time.
- Don't let mealtimes interfere with your evaluation.

Minimize "Evaluator Impact." Remember, you're an observer, not a participant.

- Don't give instructions or orders during the exercise.
- Don't help players decide what to do.
- Don't interpret the plan or procedures for them.
- Never reveal the scenario to the players.

And remember, evaluators have no authority to terminate the exercise.

Remain as Unobtrusive as Possible. In a nutshell—stay out of the way! Don't interfere with exercise play, and don't be a distraction. For example:

- Avoid using ORO communications equipment that could interfere with the players.
- If you have questions about exercise play, ask the exercise Controller or other designated contact person.
- Refer questions from media to the designated contact.

But do ask questions as needed to complete your evaluation. We'll discuss interviewing techniques next.

Interviewing Players

At times you may need to interview players to complete your evaluation. This may occur for a variety of reasons, such as:

- There are many activities to observe, and you cannot be in all places at once.
- You need to confirm that an action did or did not take place.
- Players did not document an action.

Asking questions is especially critical for simulation or walk-through interviews.

Effective Interviewing

To ensure that your interviews accomplish what you intend, remember two things:

- **Interviews should always have a clear purpose.** Remember, the purpose is to get information, not to try to stump the players!

- **Interviews require planning.** Determine beforehand the best way to get the information you need. (If possible, make this part of your data collection plan.) If you can directly observe something, there is probably no reason to ask extensive questions.

For maximum interview effectiveness, apply the 4 T's:

- **Terminology:** Avoid confusion by using the language and terms that are used in the players' plans and procedures.
- **Tone:** Use an appropriate tone: don't be adversarial or accusatory. You are merely seeking information.
- **Timing:** Ask questions at appropriate times—during down times, after the actions you're asking about are complete. This avoids interrupting players or prompting them to take actions they may have forgotten.
- **Techniques:** Learn and use effective questioning and listening techniques to get the most out of interviews.

Asking Questions

One method for keeping an interview on track is to use different types of questions depending on the type of information needed. The five types of questions (open, closed, hypothetical, probing, and leading) have slightly different applications, as shown in the following table.

Interview Questions

Question Type	Description/Uses	Examples
Open Question	▪ Encourages the flow of information. ▪ Requires more complex answers than just “yes” or “no.” ▪ Often begins with *who, what, when, where, why,* or *how.*	▪ What happens when the ALERT ECL comes in? ▪ How would the TCP be set up? ▪ What factors do you consider when authorizing excess exposure?
Closed Question	▪ Controls the flow of information. ▪ Is direct and focused. ▪ Calls for straight and simple answers.	▪ What time was the facility activated? ▪ What notifications have been made?
Hypothetical Question	▪ Poses a “What if” scenario. ▪ Not designed to stump the players. ▪ Useful in walk-throughs and simulations.	▪ What would you do if there was a traffic accident on the major evacuation route? ▪ What would you do if a person showed up at the CCC and did not have evidence of being monitored for contamination?
Probing Question	▪ Used for followup, to draw out additional information. ▪ Aims for depth rather than breadth.	[Following the answer to an open question] ▪ Can you give me some examples of situations where that might occur? ▪ What would you do next?
Leading Question	▪ May indicate a preferred answer. ▪ No place in REP evaluations.	▪ Your plan says you have 25 dosimeters—is that right? ▪ I would call the schools now, wouldn’t you? ▪ The order came in to issue KI a few minutes ago. Have you issued the KI yet?

Effective Listening

The success of your interview will depend to a great extent on your ability to accurately hear and process the responses.

Effective listening can be broken down into four key elements:

- Hear the message—LISTEN.
- Interpret the message—CONFIRM.
- Evaluate the message—PROBE.
- Respond to the message—UNDERSTAND.

Confirming is an important step in ensuring that you understand the message. A useful approach is to mentally summarize the themes being discussed and periodically restate **in your words** the main points. Don’t parrot back the exact words you heard!

Paraphrasing helps ensure that you heard the person correctly and understood what they meant to say. Paraphrasing often begins with such phrases as:

- “If I understood you correctly . . .”
- “So you’re saying . . .,”
- “You’re concerned because . . .,”
- “In other words . . ..”

Taking Notes

As you conduct your observations and interviews, it is very important to take notes. Don’t trust your memory! Your notes will form the basis for analyzing what you have seen and heard. Following these guidelines will make your note-taking more effective:

- **Be brief.** Develop your own shorthand and record important facts or key words. Don’t fill out the Evaluation Module or write summaries during the action. Brevity is especially important during interviews; taking lengthy notes while someone is talking will not convey your interest!
- **Be objective.** Don’t mix facts with opinions.
- **Write clearly.** Write clearly and legibly to use notes later in preparing the evaluation module.
- **Be thorough.** In addition to recording what you see and hear, record information that is posted on displays.
- **Keep a log.** Keep a personal log of exercise activities—especially significant events.

Correcting Issues Immediately

In very limited instances, you may have exercise participants re-demonstrate an activity found to have been unsatisfactorily performed. Whether immediate correction will be permitted, and what activities will be eligible for re-demonstration, are negotiated before the exercise as part of the Extent of Play.

Key points to remember about immediate correction include:

- Immediate correction is used primarily during tabletop exercises, drills, and out-of-sequence demonstrations.
- In an integrated exercise, the re-demonstration cannot interfere with the exercise or affect other evaluation areas.
- Agreement is reached during Extent of Play negotiations on whether re-demonstration is permitted and which activities are eligible. Find out what is allowed before the exercise!
- The ORO may give on-the-spot refresher training before the re-demonstration.
- The RAC chair makes the determination about how to classify the issues, based on the evaluator’s documentation.

Documenting the Action

Following the exercise, you will prepare a complete and detailed written summary of potential issues, which may include planning issues and performance issues. The RAC chairperson/Region will use this report in compiling an overall report of the exercise.

Actual preparation of your exercise report will happen after the exercise. However, during the exercise you will need to document your observations in enough detail to allow you to generate an effective report later. The Evaluation Module form provides the framework for documenting the action.

During the exercise you should make note of:

- Actions observed: Who (title, not name), what, where, when, how.
- Whether the criterion was adequately demonstrated.
- Deviations from the plan or procedures, even if you did not directly observe a negative impact.
- Actions and lack of action that you believe are potential issues (we’ll talk more about issues in a moment).
- Demonstrations not in accordance with the Extent of Play. (However, you should work with the Controller to ensure that demonstrations are in accordance with the Extent of Play.)
- Unsatisfactorily demonstrated actions that were immediately corrected.

Documenting Potential Issues

A **plan issue** is defined as an observed or identified inadequacy in the ORO's emergency plan or implementing procedures, rather than in the ORO's performance. Plan issues may be identified by the evaluator or reviewer, but are classified as such by the RAC Chairperson. However, plan issues are not considered to be exercise issues and will not necessarily be included in the exercise report. Plan issues may be provided to the State(s) for correction via letter from the Regional Director within 90 days of the exercise.

For example, the phone number is incorrect in the plan/procedure. But the staff member is contacted successfully by another means. The plan needs to be fixed to correct phone number or to use the other means which was successful.

An **exercise issue** is a problem in organizational performance that is linked with specific NUREG-0654 standards and applicable evaluation criteria. (The applicable standards and criteria are cited in the evaluation area criteria.) There are two categories of exercise issues:

- Deficiencies, and
- Areas requiring corrective action (ARCAs).

Exercise evaluators only identify **potential** issues. Classification of issues is made by the RAC Chair (sometimes in consultation with FEMA HQ) after feedback has been received from all evaluators and participants.

Issue Elements

When documenting potential issues, five issue elements must be included:

- **Condition:** Description of the inadequacy.
- **Possible cause:** What is responsible.
- **Reference:** Cross-references to the plan, procedures, NUREG-0654, and/or Extent of Play.
- **Effect:** What resulted, or could have resulted, from this issue.
- **Recommendation:** How to correct the problem.

The notes you take during the exercise should enable you to complete this documentation after the exercise.

Analyzing Your Observations

Analysis is a very important part of your job. You are not simply making note of what you see. As an evaluator, you must analyze, assess, and evaluate what you observe. For example:

- What actions or inaction will you identify as potential issues?
- What was the effect—or potential effect—of the actions or inaction?
- What details can you cite to support the identification of potential issues?

Your analysis of ORO performance will continue after the exercise, as you coordinate with other evaluators and develop your report.

Giving Preliminary Direct Feedback

Right after the exercise is a good time to give feedback on strengths and weaknesses you observed. This feedback is preliminary, for several reasons:

- Evaluators do not make a final determination whether a concern is an exercise issue (this is the RAC chair's job).
- The evaluators have not had time at this point to analyze their notes and the player documents.
- Each evaluator has seen only one part of the exercise.

Your team may wish to meet, as soon as the exercise ends, to develop initial positive and negative observations. When you have reached agreement, you can conduct a brief feedback session among the evaluators and participants at your location.

Strategies for effective preliminary direct feedback include:

- **Schedule in advance.** Establish the time, place, and audience for the feedback session before the exercise begins.
- **Set the stage.** Characterize your comments as **preliminary** observations.
- **Balance positive and negative.** Acknowledge everyone's participation and mention the strengths and high points of their performance. Describe problems that you saw and recommend improvements based on your experience.
- **Be brief.** Keep feedback short and to the point, without lengthy discussion. Confine your feedback to the criteria **you** evaluated.
- **Be direct.** Be tactfully direct, without sugarcoating. Refer to people by titles, not names.
- **Choose terms carefully.** Avoid such terms as "Deficiency," "ARCA," and "Planning Issue." The RAC chair will classify exercise issues after receiving feedback from all evaluators and participants.
- **Seek input.** This is your last opportunity to obtain information from the participants. Solicit their input and listen to their perspective.
- **Inform.** Announce future post-exercise meetings.

AFTER THE EXERCISE

Key tasks to be completed after the exercise include:

- Coordinating with other evaluators.
- Giving preliminary direct feedback.
- Participating in post-exercise meetings.
- Developing your Evaluation Modules.

Comprehensive Analysis

In evaluating an exercise, we look at functions in two ways: horizontally and vertically.

- Was the function adequately demonstrated horizontally (e.g., communication inside your location, Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs))?

- Was the function adequately demonstrated vertically throughout the entire response organization (e.g., communication between the EOC and local response organizations)?

This comprehensive analysis is required to determine if there was an effect, or a potential effect, of an exercise participant's action.

Coordinating With Other Evaluators

As you gather, assess, and analyze information, you may find a need to coordinate with other evaluators at your location or at another location to get the full picture of what occurred. Coordinating with other evaluators enables you to fill in the missing pieces of the evaluation puzzle.

For example, an evaluator at an EOC needs to coordinate with the evaluator at the EAS radio station to determine times of key events such as simulated EAS message broadcasts.

Participating in Post-Exercise Meetings

The initial team meeting after the exercise is only the first of what may be several debriefing meetings you will take part in. At these meetings, you will have an opportunity to:

- Provide input to the exercise timeline. (One of the tasks completed in the post-exercise debriefing is to piece together the various evaluators' event logs into one consolidated timeline. When evaluators' logs differ, judgments must be made about the most reasonable timeline.)
- Discuss any problems you identified with the exercise play at your location.
- Discuss your evaluation with the other evaluators to develop the complete picture of the play.
- Prepare narratives and complete your evaluation modules.

Completing Your Evaluation Modules

Documentation of your evaluation begins during the exercise and continues in the completion of your Evaluation Module(s). You will complete one Evaluation Module for each criterion within your assignment or contribute to another team member's module. There are three parts to the Evaluation Module:

- A question.
- The narrative.
- An issues section.

Question. Only one question needs to be answered: Was this criterion adequately demonstrated? The question has three possible answers:

YES: The desired result was achieved—whether or not it was done in accordance with the plans/procedures. If it was not done in accordance with the plans/procedures, then a planning issue (not an exercise performance issue) would likely be identified.

NO: The desired result was not achieved. This might be due to the Extent of Play not being followed.

N/A: Designates an activity or function that does not require demonstration under the emergency plans or that is specified as not required in the Extent of Play agreement.

Narrative. Each criterion requires a written narrative of what transpired. Be sure each narrative you write:

- Is a logical discussion of events.
- Supports your recommendation that the criterion was or was not adequately demonstrated.
- Contains the following information:
  - All the vital information
  - Effect
  - Supporting detail
  - Previous ARCA demonstrations
  - Any items that were immediately corrected

Narrative Content

- **Vital information** includes who, what, where, when, why, and how—as applicable to the specific criterion you are evaluating. You must use your knowledge of the evaluation criterion, your detailed notes, player documents, and the Extent of Play to guide you.

- **Effect** is an important part of the narrative. If there is an observed weakness, the narrative must address the effect on the ORO's ability to accomplish assigned tasks.

- **Supporting detail** must be provided for any issues identified. Regions differ on the amount of detail required, so check with your team leader/RAC chair.

  But be careful—don't draw conclusions without supporting facts. For example, state "No evidence of annual calibration," not "Instruments were not calibrated."

- **Previous ARCA demonstrations**, if any, require discussion, including whether they have been resolved, the corrective action demonstrated, and a detailed discussion of the actions accomplished to resolve the ARCA. If the ARCA has not been resolved, identify it as an "Unresolved ARCA" and describe in detail the reason for this conclusion.

- **Immediate corrections** should be discussed, including:
  - The initial unsatisfactory performance.
  - Any refresher training given.
  - Whether the re-demonstration was adequate.

Evaluation Module: Issues

As part of your evaluation, you should document any actions or lack of action that you believe are potential issues. This includes any deviations from the plan or procedures—even if you did not directly observe a negative impact. You may need to confer with other evaluators to determine whether there was an impact.

Performance issues will be included in the final exercise report—but, remember, your potential issues may or may not make it into the final exercise report. The RAC chair responsible for developing the report will consider your issues in the context of the entire exercise.

Planning issues will be put in a separate letter to the ORO.

Issue Elements

Each Evaluation Module has a page for identifying potential issues. This is where you will write up the five issue elements mentioned earlier:

- **Condition**—Description of the inadequacy.
- **Possible cause**—What created the issue; responsibility.
- **Reference**—Cross-reference to the plan, procedures, NUREG-0654, and/or the Extent of Play. Some regions require the evaluator to look up the specific NUREG-0654 element; consult your team leader.
- **Effect**—Discussion of what resulted, or could have resulted, from this issue.
- **Recommendation**—Suggestions on how to correct the issue.
